



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

S106/25/0040

Deer Fields Park, Land To The North of, Hilltop Country Park, Emms Lane, Brooks Green, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0TR

DESCRIPTION:

Discharge to remove planning obligation for water neutrality to approved application DC/23/1235

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/23/1235	Change of use of the land from agricultural to the use as a holiday caravan park for forty-seven static caravans for holiday use from 1st February to 5th January	Application Permitted on 17.06.2024
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CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS:

Parish Council support the application.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Planning Application DC/23/1235 was granted consent on 17.06.2024. This permission was for the following:

“Change of use of the land from agricultural to the use as a holiday caravan park for forty-seven static caravans for holiday use from 1st February to 5th January”.

This submission seeks to discharge Schedule 4 of the s106, which binds the Application Site and the Offsetting land for the purpose of allowing development to be delivered by remaining water neutral in perpetuity.

A 2021 Position Statement from Natural England identified that it could not be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites. As a consequence, and to comply with the legal duties set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the Habitat Regulations), all new development since has been required to demonstrate water neutrality. Schedule 4 of the legal agreement secured (off-site) offsetting to ensure the development achieved water neutrality.

On 31st October 2025 Natural England formally withdrew the 2021 Position Statement, citing a package of measures that they were satisfied would safeguard the Arun Valley sites. Principal amongst these measures is a reduction in the Southern Water abstraction licence 'by March 2026'. However, given the licence change has not yet taken place Horsham District Council, as competent authority under the Habitats Regulations, cannot yet be certain that new development will not result in adverse impacts on the Arun Valley sites.

To ensure development can come forward as water neutral in the meantime, the Council has agreed with Natural England to use the significant water savings made by Southern Water in 2024/25 through their programme of leakage reduction (amongst other measures). This has generated some 3,240,000

litres per day of water savings that can now be attributed to new development without increasing water abstraction in the Arun Valley beyond baseline. These savings were previously to be used to launch the Sussex North Water Certification Scheme (SNWCS), however following the withdrawal statement SNWCS will no longer be launching. Natural England standing advice dated 10 November 2025 raises no objection to using these savings to enable development to come forward. The standing advice clarifies that it functions as Natural England's formal response pursuant to Regulation 63(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to all relevant planning applications which seek to achieve water neutrality using the above Southern Water savings.

An Appropriate Assessment was undertaken as part of planning application ref: DC/25/1955 (which sought to remove conditions for on-site efficiencies to deliver water neutrality) which demonstrated that the anticipated increase in mains water consumption from this development, alongside all other development granted since the 31st October 2025, will not exceed 3,240,000 litres per day.

Accordingly, the s106 obligation no longer serves a planning purpose, as no off-site mitigations are necessary, and the development will not have an Adverse Effect on the Integrity of the Arun Valley Site, either alone or in combination with other plan and projects, thereby complying with Regulations 63 and 70 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, HDPF Policy 31, and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Hannah Darley Date: 23rd March 2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 14.04.2026